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The situation in the Middle East

Right of peoples to self-determination

Note verbale dated 3 July 2007 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to its note dated 31 May 2007 and its note dated 6 January 2007, has the honour to transmit to him a letter concerning the health situation of Syrian citizen Becher al-Makat, a Syrian detainee in the Al-Jalboua Israeli prison, who has been detained for 22 years because of his rejection of the Israeli occupation (see annex).

It would be greatly appreciated if the present note and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13 and 66, and of the Security Council.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 3 July 2007 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

As both you and the international community, represented by the United Nations, know, Israel continues to occupy the Syrian Golan, in violation of the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and of hundreds of resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly in that regard.

The various Israeli violations of resolutions of international legitimacy and of international law, norms and instruments, including international humanitarian law, are known to all. In the occupied Syrian Golan, those violations extend to the citizens who have opposed the illegitimate occupation, the illegal colonization and the efforts to change the demographic nature of the Golan. Our citizens in the Golan are subject to extrajudicial imprisonment, detention and torture, which are violations of international instruments and law.

The practices of Israeli Governments in the occupied Golan, particularly as they relate to prisoners and detainees, are blatant violations of all the Geneva Conventions and of all treaties on prisoners of war and civilian persons living under occupation. Those practices encroach on the rights of the prisoners and detainees and are a flagrant violation of all international and humanitarian norms. We hold the authorities in Israel, the occupying Power, fully responsible for the deterioration in the health of all the detainees, namely Sayṭan Nimr al-Walī, Bishr al-Maqat and Ṣidqi al-Maqat. We would like to remind the United Nations of its role and its legal and humanitarian responsibility to protect our detained Syrian prisoners, especially since the health of the prisoner Bishr al-Maqat — who recently suffered a heart attack and, consequently, was taken to Al-'Afūlah Hospital, where he underwent arterial catheterization — has begun to deteriorate after more than 22 years of detention in the prisons of the Israeli occupation. The Israeli Prisons Authority has deliberately impeded the work of representatives of the Red Cross when they visit those prisoners and detainees. This obliges the United Nations to intervene in order to make Israel fulfil its international commitments in that regard.

My country's delegation calls on you and, through you, the United Nations and its competent bodies to pressure Israel to allow immediately representatives of the Red Cross, accompanied by specialized doctors to provide the required treatment, to visit prisoner Bishr al-Maqat and his fellow prisoners in preparation for their immediate release. They have been incarcerated in Israeli jails for approximately 22 years (see annexed list of detainees) and are in extremely poor health. In that regard, we would like to remind you of the similarly inhumane detainment that led to the death of Syrian prisoner Hayil Abu Zayd just one month after his release from prison in 2005. His release had been secured at that time thanks to the efforts of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

My country's delegation requests that this letter be circulated as an official document of the United Nations and distributed to the President of the General Assembly and the President and members of the Security Council. It should be noted that we brought up the issue of Sayṭan al-Walī and the other Syrian detainees from the occupied Syrian Golan with Michael C. Williams, your Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process, during a meeting that took place on

19 January 2007. We also brought to your attention the wretched condition of the Syrian detainees from the occupied Syrian Golan in Israeli prisons in our letter of 16 January 2006 and in our letter contained in document A/61/935-S/2007/325, as well as to the attention of your High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva two years ago.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

Annexed list of detainees

Name of prisoner	*Date of imprisonment*	*Sentence*
Bishr Sulayman Ahmad al-Maqat	1985	27 years
Sidqī Sulayman Ahmad al-Maqat	1985	27 years
Sayṭan Nimr al-Walī	1985	27 years
ʻĀṣim Mahmūd al-Walī	1985	27 years
Wi'ām Mahmūd Ammashah	1999	20 years
Shām Kamāl Shams	2003	13 years
Kamīl Sulayman Khāṭir	2001	8 years
Jūlan Samīh Abu Khayr	2006	9 years
Nadīm Farīd al-Qadmanī	2006	9 years
Lu'ay Bihjat Mar'ī	2006	9 years
Samīh Samārah	2001	6 years
Muhammad Abdu as-Shamāly	2003	7 years
Hatim Muhammad al-Khaṭīb	2003	4 years
Husayn al-Khaṭīb	2003	4 years
Mahmūd Sha'bān al-Khaṭīb	2006	detained